

Paul has been talking about the things that we can only see through faith and he now discusses a new body that we will receive after the death of our mortal bodies. We may not be able to see this promise now but we trust that God will keep His promise to give us a body capable of being eternally in His presence. We will then be rewarded for what we did in our mortal bodies at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

1 For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Paul is continuing his discussion of the superiority reality of spiritual things ("the things which are not seen") over physical things ("the things which are seen"). He said in the previous verse: **2 Cor. 4:18** "*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*"

"For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle [tent] were dissolved [to take apart; to dismantle]" – Paul uses the metaphor of a tent for our physical bodies. A tent is a temporary structure that can be taken down and disassembled once it served its purpose. Our bodies (i.e. our physical life) are temporary dwelling places until they have served their purpose.

"we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" – By faith we understand that death is not the end. When our physical bodies have served their purpose and can no longer support our physical life, then God will give us glorified bodies that He has created so that we may live in His presence eternally.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

"For in this we groan [to sigh], earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" – The promise of being set free from our deteriorating mortal body with its weaknesses and sinful passions and be given a glorified body causes us to groan because of our yearning for it to happen.

"If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" – We will not be disembodied spirits floating around after we die. This may be an argument against the popular concept of ghosts and apparitions as the spirits of dead people. Paul specifically states that saints who have died will receive a glorified body like the one that Christ had after His resurrection (**Phil. 3:20-21** "*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*").

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

"For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan [sigh], being burdened [under a weight]" – While living in this world we have to deal with the problems and cares of this life as well as the aches and pains of our mortal bodies. The prospect of leaving it all behind can be attractive and causes us to groan within ourselves for the day when it becomes a reality.

"not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon" – Paul was not encouraging Christians to commit suicide in order to flee the problems of life. Our desire should not be for death (to be "unclothed") but for the more abundant life that will be ours after death (to be "clothed upon").

"that mortality might be swallowed up of life" – Our desire should be that the mortality of our physical bodies would be "swallowed up" (consumed; overcome) by the life that comes from God.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

"Now he that hath wrought [to perform; achieve] us for the selfsame thing is God" – We do not have to do this for ourselves nor would we be capable of doing so. It is God who has planned for us to spend eternity with Him and He will achieve that by giving us a glorified body. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," which is why God promises that "we shall all be changed" so that we can reside eternally in His presence (1 Cor. 15:50-54).

"who also hath given unto us the earnest [pledge; down payment] of the Spirit" – The indwelling Holy Spirit is God's pledge to us that He will keep His promise to redeem our bodies (**Rom. 8:22-23** "*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*").

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

The "earnest" of the Spirit gives us the confidence that God will fulfill His promise of an eternity with Him. Having this confidence allows us to accept the fact that we are currently unable to fully enjoy God's presence while we are in our mortal body.

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" – Our faith allows us to patiently wait for the day when we receive our glorified body so that we can be in the presence of God eternally.

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" – Paul reemphasizes our confidence that comes through our faith. We know it will happen and we look forward to that day because our desire is to be set free from our mortal body and live eternally with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

The Greek word translated “labour” refers to a goal or something to strive for. Knowing that we will eventually stand in God’s presence motivates us to please Him, whether we are here in our mortal bodies or with Him in our glorified bodies. We are not working for our salvation; rather, our obedience is motivated by the knowledge that we are accountable to Him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” – The “all” here is not “all mankind” but “all Christians.” All non-Christians will stand at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15), where their fate has already been sealed and they will be judged according to their works (**Rev. 20:12** “*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works*”). At the Judgment Seat of Christ, Christians will be judged to determine the rewards they will receive. Paul is also including himself in those who will stand accountable to God at the judgment seat.

“that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done” – At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the issue will not be sin because our sins were dealt with on the cross (**1 Cor. 3:13-15** “*Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire*”).

“whether *it be* good or bad” – The Greek words used here do not refer to moral good or moral evil. Rather, they refer to the eternal value of our works. As stated in 1 Cor. 3:13-15, our works will be tested by fire and we will receive a reward for those things that we’ve done that withstand the test. The “bad” things that have no eternal value will be burned up and we will suffer their loss instead of receiving a reward.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

“Knowing therefore the terror [fear; reverence] of the Lord, we persuade men” – In light of the fact that believers and unbelievers alike are accountable to God, Paul said that we should work to persuade people to come to Christ for salvation. **Heb. 10:31** “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*”

“but we are made manifest [to make visible; to make known] unto God” – The preaching and ministry work that Paul and his companions were doing was not hidden from God. He knew what they did and their motivations for doing it. The false teachers that had come to Corinth were typically there for what they could gain from the Corinthians. God understood Paul’s sincerity in preaching the gospel without such selfish motives.

“and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences [to be conscience or aware of something]” – Paul believed that the Corinthians also understood that he and his companions sincerely and honestly proclaimed the truth of the gospel.

Verses 12-21: Paul’s discussion so far has not been to convince the Corinthians of his sincerity but to give them something to answer those who try to promote a gospel based on what you can see instead of what was in their hearts. Paul’s motivation was to live for Christ, the One Who died for him. Therefore he was compelled, as an ambassador for Christ, to plead with people to be reconciled to God.